



American Planning Association

Making Great Communities Happen

Strategies for Meaningful Community Engagement in Brownfields Redevelopment

*2007 U.S. EPA Community Involvement Training
Conference (Jacksonville, FL)*

June 20, 2007



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Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions
- About Our Work
- The Bethel Experience
- Group Discussion
- Next Steps



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Meet the Team

- Mary Nelson, Bethel New Life, Inc.
- Mildred Wiley, Bethel New Life, Inc.
- Lynn Ross, AICP, American Planning Association



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Who is Bethel New Life?

- Comprehensive, faith-based community development corp.
- Dedicated to weaving a healthy, sustainable community
- Serves west side Chicago neighborhoods
- Nationally recognized for
 - developing employment and business opportunities for low-income residents
 - building affordable housing
 - providing needed quality of life opportunities for community residents of all ages.



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Who is the American Planning Association?

- National nonprofit public interest and research organization
- Committed to urban, suburban, regional, and rural planning.
- APA and its professional institute, the American Institute of Certified Planners, advance the art and science of planning to meet the needs of people and society.



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Meet the Participants

- Who are you?
- Why are you here?



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About Our Work

- Three-year initiative with the goal of helping communities see brownfield sites as areas of opportunity.
- Engage communities in addressing brownfields



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Why Brownfields Matter

- Quality of Life
- Economic Development
- Environmental Improvement



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- What does it take to create and maintain a collaborative brownfields redevelopment process?



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Who Are We Talking To?

- Community Residents
- Planners
- Developers
- Federal, State and Local Officials
- Environmental Professionals



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The Bethel New Life Experience

*Seeing Brownfields as
Opportunities for Community
Engagement*



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History Behind Neighborhood Revitalization Efforts



- Protecting neighborhood assets
 - Support services for community residents
 - Saving the Green Line & Conservancy
 - Adaptive re-use: St. Anne's Hospital & St. Mel's School
- Participatory processes
 - Community organizing
 - Community policing
 - Collaborative planning
- Industrial retention
- Affordable housing
- Transit-oriented development



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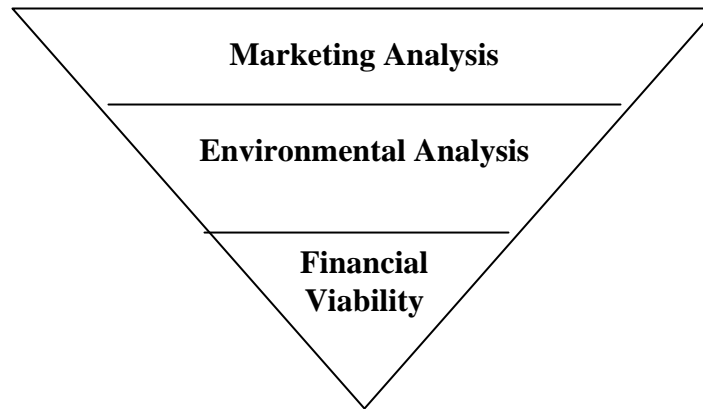


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Industrial Triage

Industrial Triage is a methodology that enables community developers to focus limited resources on viable sites for redevelopment. It's a process that assesses market & environmental conditions while accounting for the influence of community character, and economic incentives.



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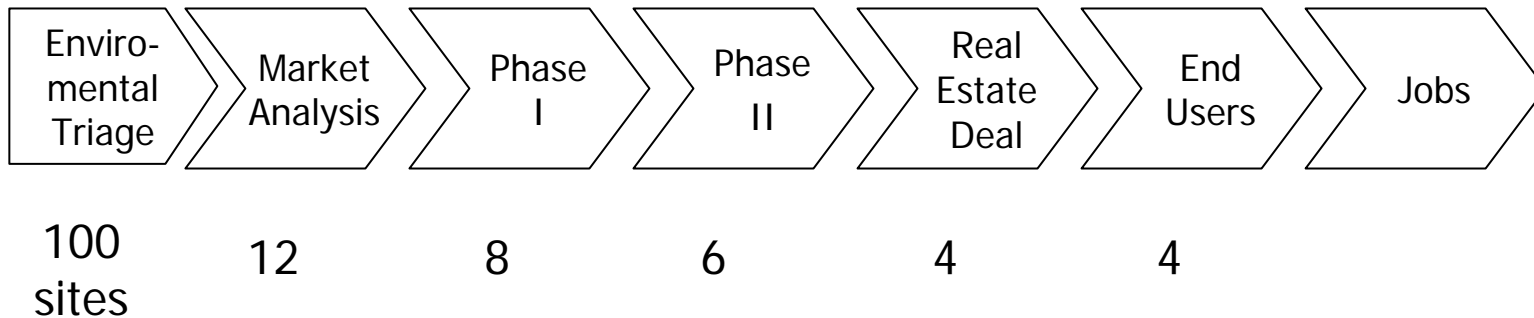
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The Process



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Lake/Pulaski Commercial Center

Facts

- Two stories
- Energy efficient/"Smart Building"
- 1st floor – Retail enterprises
- 2nd floor – Day care & employment center
- Connected to elevated public transit
- Total budget: \$4 million

Challenges

- Environmental/USTs
- Title possession
- Securing sources

Sources

- Bank construction loan
- Empowerment Zone grant
- Illinois Department of Commerce & Community Affairs
- Chicago Department of the Environment
- Illinois Department of Energy
- Bethel New Life Equity
- New Markets Tax Credits



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Economic Impact

- Three local small businesses (dry cleaners, Subway, Coffee Shop) started or expanded
- Attorney General's Office of Consumer Fraud
- Community Savings Center: Park National Bank, BNL, Thrivent Individual Development Account (IDA) program, new products, financial counseling, tax preparation
- Over 75 new jobs created



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Build Project Consensus

- Identify opportunities and players early
 - Seek partners, allies, and champions
 - Research site and possible end users
 - Pursue multiple community benefits
- Involve:
 - Concerned Residents
 - Block Clubs
 - Churches
 - Employers
 - City Departments
 - Local School Councils
 - Developers
 - Outside Experts
 - Others



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Role in Advocacy

- Effectively communicate issues facing the community
 - Community principles: Economic security, ecological integrity, quality of life, public participation
- Mobilize residents to face issues & demands
- Coordinate resources & efforts
- Measure effectiveness of efforts
- Partners
 - Argonne National Laboratory
 - Annie E. Casey Foundation, Ford Foundation & MacArthur Foundation
 - Woodstock Institute



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Gain Political Support

- Involve local city council person at the beginning
- Learn what local, state, and federal resources and programs are available
- Get to know the people involved in those programs
- Get to know regional and local U.S. EPA brownfield representatives
- Understand city's plans and ideas, and stay up to date with them



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Sustain Effort to Finish Job

- Innovation involves more time and money
- Recognize process is long and often difficult
- Share the glory
- Keep your eyes on the prize



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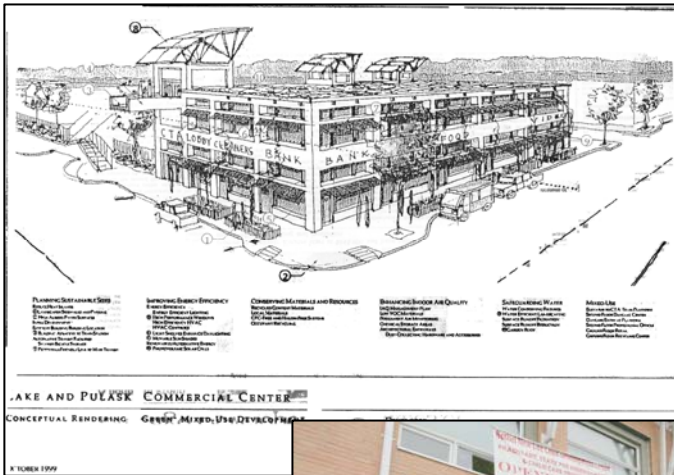
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Success!



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Discussion Questions

What are the biggest challenges you face in engaging community groups in brownfields?

What tools or strategies for community engagement have you had success with?

Who are the projects, people, or organizations you think we should profile for the project?



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Stay Connected

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